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Lack of Alternatives Limits U.S. Policy in Asia

The rapid succession of events affecting Asian nations—the entrance of the Chinese Communists into the Korean war, the Chinese march into Tibet, the renewal of Vietminh operations in Indo-China, the arrival of Peiping's representatives to discuss at Lake Success Communist charges about American action in Formosa and Korea, preliminary discussions of a peace treaty with Japan—have increasingly diverted American attention from the problems of Europe to those of Asia. They have also enhanced the significance of the current debate in this country concerning the priority to be given one continent as compared to the other.

Intervention for What?

This debate, in spite of sharp words exchanged by Administration spokesmen with some of their Republican critics, does not involve a conflict between isolationists and interventionists. On the contrary, it is clear that the Administration's most vigorous opponents, notably Senator William F. Knowland, Republican of California, are urging not less intervention in Asia but more, with increased American assistance to the Chinese Nationalists. In a statement made at Taipei on November 23, during a post-election tour of Japan and Formosa, Senator Knowland recommended that President Truman's order of June 27 neutralizing Formosa should be changed to permit the Chinese Nationalists not only to combat Communist preparations for an invasion of the island but also to help guerrillas who are opposing Peiping on the mainland. "Attacking the mainland would be more defense than aggression," Senator Knowland said, ac-

cording to a *New York Times* dispatch.

Far-reaching discussion may be expected in the months ahead on the issue of whether or not it is wise for the United States at this stage of its military preparedness to concentrate its admittedly limited ground forces in Asia, where they might be pinned down by a prolonged and inconclusive conflict, thereby leaving Europe relatively unprotected against possible aggression by the U.S.S.R. But looking, for the moment, solely at the Asian situation, it becomes of immediate importance for the United States to determine the objectives of the stepped-up intervention proposed by Senator Knowland and others who share his views.

Nothing will be gained, and much may be lost, by recrimination about alleged mistakes of the past. Critics of the Administration's policy in Asia, however, have logic on their side when they contend that if the paramount goal of American

foreign policy is to contain Russia and communism everywhere, then all manifestations of communism and of cooperation with Moscow by any nation in Asia must be opposed without stint. From their point of view it is illogical to build dikes against the Communist tide in Korea or Indo-China, yet discourage Chiang Kai-shek's desire to reconquer the Chinese mainland and overthrow the regime established by Mao Tse-tung.

The issue now before the United States is not whether we should actively intervene in Asia—this we have been doing for many years—but what we intend to accomplish by increased intervention. The Asian nations which have achieved independence only since 1945—India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, the Philippines—are not, as sometimes erroneously believed here, opposed to, or lukewarm about, United Nations action against aggression, specifically in the case of Korea. True, all

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of them (and this is reported also to be true of China and Japan) are fearful of war, having all too recently experienced the disasters of conquest or civil strife. They also realize more clearly than we do that armed conflict would set back by many years their modest hopes for recovery and economic development.

Their seemingly aloof attitude, however, is due—particularly in the case of the Indians and Indonesians—to a deep-seated apprehension that UN military intervention, for lack of other adequately prepared military forces, will have to be implemented chiefly by the United States; and that such intervention, no matter how successful on the field of battle, will lead to the maintenance in, or restoration to, power of individuals or groups who, in their opinion, represent a return to the past, not a step toward the future.

It is this apprehension that accounts for the dark forebodings with which responsible Asians who are themselves opposed to Russia and communism view some of the leaders on the Asian continent who enjoy American support—Bao Dai in Indo-China, Marshal Pibul Songgram in Thailand, President Syngman Rhee in Korea and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa. Even anti-Communists, fearful of possible expansion by Peiping into countries which have important Chinese minorities—for example among the Thais—are so deeply convinced of the need for definitive termination of colonial rule and for national independence of all Asian peoples that they feel sympathetic to the cause of Ho Chi Minh, Communist leader of the Vietminh forces in Indo-China. Similarly, many Indians, while disturbed by Chinese action in Tibet and reports of Russian designs in the Himalayas, are far from being convinced that they should take up arms against Peiping if the result of war should be the return of Chiang Kai-shek to the mainland.

Is There a 'Vital Center'?

When queried by Asians on these points, Americans can justifiably reply that the political alignments in Asia, for the time being at least, offer a strictly limited set of alternatives: In Indo-China, for example, American spokesmen argue that there is today a choice of two evils—Ho Chi Minh or Bao Dai—of whom the Emperor is regarded as the lesser evil not because of any merits of his own but because he is anti-Communist. The basic problem facing the United States is to discover a "vital center" in Asian countries

What Should Be U.S. Foreign Policy?

In the far-reaching debate now under way about the aims and methods of American foreign policy, the following FPA publications should be of assistance to you:

Foreign Policy Reports

MILITARY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, by Blair Bolles, December 15.

MILITARY AND ECONOMIC STRENGTH OF WESTERN EUROPE, by Vera Micheles Dean and Howard C. Gary, October 15.

THE U.S. AND POINT FOUR PROBLEMS, by Howard C. Gary, September 15.

PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN ASIA, by Daniel Thorner, April 15.

SHOULD THE U.S. RE-EXAMINE ITS FOREIGN POLICY? by Vera Micheles Dean, December 15, 1949.

Single copies, 25¢; subscriptions \$5; FPA members, \$4.

which, first, could maintain itself in power and, second, would be acceptable to the majority of the American people. The choice often is not, as in the Western world, between democracy and Communist dictatorship, but between a one-party dictatorship of the Communists and a dictatorship of anti-Communists sometimes controlled by military leaders, as in the case of Chiang Kai-shek and Marshal Pibul. If, as many observers believe, the November 7 elections demonstrated that the majority of the American people would not tolerate acceptance of any Communist regime in Asia, then it is difficult to see what the President or the Secretary of State can do except what now is being done in Indo-China and elsewhere—and that is accept "the lesser evil" group and give it military and economic aid. The chief difficulty with this policy, which seems reasonable to many Americans, is that it looks quite different to many Asians for whom Bao Dai, Chiang and Syngman Rhee represent the greater, not the lesser, evil.

To this Americans can reply, in all fairness, that maintenance or restoration of dictatorial elements is an interim policy. The ultimate objective of the United States, it has been repeatedly stated in Washington, is to give the Asian peoples an opportunity to choose freely the government they desire and to develop political and economic institutions best suited to their needs. With this objective

responsible Asians would have no quarrel. But what if the Asian peoples decide, as seems to be the prospect in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon, and possibly also in Korea, that what they want is a socialist economy which they regard as a bulwark against communism? Would socialism in Asia be acceptable to the majority of the American people? Or would we look with apprehension on that development also, as many Americans have done with respect to European socialism, for example in Germany?

Moreover, even in those of the Asian countries where a "vital center" might conceivably be developed in the future, time and patience will be required to educate and train populations at present 80 to 85 per cent illiterate. During this interval, which may be a matter of years, steps must be taken to make sure that the political, economic and social reforms the United States genuinely wants to see carried out in Asia are not blocked or stultified by anti-Communist regimes which, once they have been assured of American aid against communism, show little or no concern for the welfare of their peoples. The need for such safeguards is evident everywhere in Asia, not least in the Philippines, where the government of President Elpidio Quirino has been charged by both Americans and Filipinos with corruption, incompetence and failure to improve the lot of the farmers and workers.

Wherever the United States has intervened in Asia, it has had to recognize, sooner or later, that constitutions and parliaments patterned on those of the United States or Britain are houses built on sand unless, at the outset, they can be solidly underpinned with a viable economic and social system. Otherwise the Asian peoples—asked to choose between corrupt and incompetent one-party dictatorships they know and the possibility that the Communists might prove less corrupt and more competent—may, without any ideological attachment to Russia, about which they know practically nothing, turn to communism. If the United States is to help avert this contingency, the object of American intervention will have to be not only the ousting of the Communists but the implementation of a program of reforms tantamount to a revolution. Will the American people support intervention for this purpose?

VERA MICHELES DEAN

(This is the fifth article in a series on current problems in Asia.)

Fear of Asian War Fosters 'Neutralism' in Europe

Whatever may be the immediate Chinese Communist reasons for intervening in North Korea, it is apparent that this development interlocks with crucial decisions now being made in Western Europe. Among them the most critical involves the proposed creation of unified armed forces—with German participation—which would be able to resist any future Russian aggression.

The Soviet Union has sought by direct diplomatic initiative to disrupt these plans by proposing the immediate negotiation of a German peace treaty and the permanent demilitarization of the former Reich. Indirectly, Communist action in Korea, by absorbing much of America's military reserve, has revealed how little armed aid the United States could give Europe should a serious Russian offensive begin simultaneously at several weak spots around the vast periphery of the U.S.S.R.

The implications of this situation were clarified by General Omar N. Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at Atlanta on November 17, when he declared that the Korean war had left the West without adequate military reserves except for the atomic bomb. Europeans generally fear the prospect of atomic warfare in the belief that their territory would be first overrun and then "liberated" by bombing.

Growth of 'Neutralism'

These fears have fostered the growth of defeatism and strengthened the hand not only of Europe's Communists but also of "neutralists" who maintain that the "cold war" is chiefly a struggle between the United States and the U.S.S.R. in which other countries should refuse to become involved by taking the role of "stooges" for one side or the other. This "neutralist" sentiment has been augmented by recent developments in the Far East. Some Europeans are worried that General Douglas MacArthur's well-known preoccupation with Asia may cause Washington to stress Asian affairs at the expense of Europe. In view of the new, large-scale Chinese offensive, European fears have been increased that MacArthur's leadership will lead to a costly contest in China, leaving the American cupboard bare for effective military aid to Europe.

The Administration's decision on November 15 to make the congressionally authorized loan of \$62.5 million available

to Spain and the earlier UN resolution adopted on November 4 with American support lifting the 1946 ban on the Franco regime—now implemented by a decision to fill the long-vacant ambassadorship in Madrid—have reinforced neutralist sentiment. Many Europeans claim that Washington intends to defend Europe at the Pyrenees rather than the Elbe or even the Rhine. They also maintain that our tacit support for Franco throws doubt on ultimate American support for democracy in Europe. The involvement of France and Britain in costly campaigns in Indo-China and Malaya respectively further reduce the availability of defense resources in Europe itself.

...."Neutralist" sentiment has manifested itself in different parts of Europe in accordance with local political rivalries and traditional national interests. In France, for example, it has combined with the historic fear of German militarism to produce strong opposition to any German armaments which cannot be safely controlled. The French have consequently resisted any proposals for granting Bonn greater autonomy and insisted on integrating German troops under a unified European army. Paris has also demanded that economic integration of the character anticipated by the Schuman coal and steel plan is a necessary corollary of a European army, since it would deny the Germans separate control of war material resources. Ideally, the French would like to achieve full political federation. Even those who have overcome their fear of a direct German attack are apprehensive lest a separate German attempt to gain the lost territories in the East might draw France into a war with the Soviet Union.

The British have hitherto been our most enthusiastic partner in advocating strong Western defense, based on a combined command of separate national armies. In recent weeks, however, some criticism has emerged in Britain within the Labor party itself, particularly against plans for augmented military expenditure within the North Atlantic pact framework. Specifically these critics have charged that increased reliance on American aid will further reduce the independence of Britain—which they had hoped would serve as a useful balance wheel in moderating East-West tensions—and may lead to a fatal arms race with the Soviet Union. Moreover, Labor politicians faced with probable elections next year hesitate to endorse

vast new expenditures which would increase the economic stringency that has already caused a disturbing rise in prices as reported on November 26 by Hugh Gaitskell, Sir Stafford Cripps' successor as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Perhaps the most serious setback to European defense plans has occurred in Western Germany itself. Dr. Konrad Adenauer, Christian Democratic Chancellor of the Federal Republic, has favored German rearmament, although insisting on a larger role for his countrymen than that advocated by the French. He also demanded greater American protection during the process of arming. The whole concept of German rearmament prior to full independence, however, came in for a severe blow at state elections in the American zone—in Hesse and Wuerttemberg-Baden on November 19 and in Bavaria a week later—when the Social Democrats, who had made their opposition to rearmament a major campaign issue, won substantial increases and in Hesse achieved a majority. Interpreters think that these results, coupled with widespread abstention from the polls by young people, reflect strong popular opposition to involvement in any war and an attitude of defeatism and nihilism growing out of the bitter experiences of two world wars.

As a result of these elections, Dr. Adenauer has adopted a more stubborn, nationalistic attitude, manifested on November 24 by a request that the Western Allies negotiate a "security treaty" with Germany to replace the occupation statute.

Compromise at Strasbourg ...

These conflicting attitudes came into the open during recent debates in the European Assembly at Strasbourg, resulting in the adoption on November 23, by 83 to 7, with 19 abstentions, of a compromise proposal based on the French plan which advocated the creation of a European army under a single political authority. Only the German Social Democrats voted against the resolution, even though it provided for German military equality. They had demanded equal political influence as well. The British Labor party delegates as well as the Swedes and Icelanders abstained. An integrated army would not furnish the Western defense forces in a short period that the United States has been urging, but it

would lay the foundation for ultimate strength in non-Soviet Europe. This compromise recommendation of the European Assembly, however, depends for its implementation on the willingness and ability of the United States to ensure Europe's security during the armament stage, the alleviation of German popular hostility to rearmament; and the ability of Europe's economic and political structures to withstand the strain of costly armament programs, even with American aid.

It was no doubt in the hope of helping to frustrate West European defense plans that eight Eastern nations' foreign ministers at Prague on October 21 issued a declaration on Germany. This statement attacked the September 19 New York decision of Britain, France and the United States, alleging that it sanctioned the revival of German militarism, Nazism and war industry. The declaration called for a ban on German rearmament, the unification of Germany, the suppression of war industry, the conclusion of a peace treaty and withdrawal of all occupation troops, and the creation of an all-German council, representing East and West Germany equally, to set up a new government.

On November 4 the Soviet Union formally proposed that the Council of Foreign Ministers meet to discuss a German settlement on the basis of this declaration. About a week later France, Britain and the United States, in somewhat different statements, rejected the Soviet proposal, attacked Russian policy in Germany, and made alternative suggestions for a conference which would discuss other outstanding issues, such as the Austrian treaty and the Far Eastern situation, along with the German question.

It is doubtful if, in the light of recent European developments, any progress could be expected to come from a conference called on the basis of the Soviet proposals. Many observers believe the proposals were merely intended to strengthen neutralist sentiment in Europe among those who hope that negotiation may ease international tension and make costly rearmament unnecessary.

The ultimate outcome of the struggle for public support in Europe, however, may well be determined by developments in Asia, Washington and Lake Success.

In particular Europeans, as reported by J. J. Servan Schreiber, influential French journalist, in the November 26 *New York Herald Tribune*, are looking to the personal fate of Secretary of State Dean Acheson as an index of whether or not the Atlantic policy of political, economic and military partnership in Europe will be discarded for a more active policy in Asia. Whether or not this stress on Mr. Acheson's role is justified, it is true that any signs of a renunciation of the Atlantic policy will increase neutralist hopes of escaping involvement in any Russo-American hostilities. It is against this background that the lame-duck session of Congress and the UN meetings with the Chinese Communist delegation assume an historic significance.

FRED W. RIGGS

News in the Making

ARAB ECONOMISTS MEET: A UN sponsored meeting of economists and experts from the Arab countries has described the conditions of the Arab peasantry as "disastrous." Currently meeting in Cairo, the assembly of experts will spend its three weeks of deliberations in attempts to find means of improving the situation. The delegates agreed that inequities in land ownership, combined with an over-crowding of the cultivated land, were the main problems. A Lebanese professor said that unless conditions change the peasants will seek their "solution by revolution."

FEDERATION FOR ERITREA: A plan to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia was approved on November 25 by the UN General Assembly's Special Political Committee. The plan, expected to receive a favorable vote from the full Assembly, provides for a transition period ending not later than September 15, 1952. The former Italian colony will continue under British administration until an Eritrean government is organized and a constitution drafted. It will then become an autonomous unit under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown.

ANGLO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS STRAINED: Social tension within Egypt has contributed to deteriorating relations between London and Cairo. Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin reported to Commons on November 20 that Britain had rejected Egypt's request for cancellation of the 1936 treaty which authorizes the presence of British troops in the Suez Canal Zone. King Farouk has been accused of seeking to divert domestic unrest to targets of attack abroad.

RAW MATERIAL PRICES: The prices of strategic raw materials, which skyrocketed after the outbreak of the Korean war, do not now reveal a clear trend. Tin, priced three times as high as during World War II, has fallen about 8 cents a pound in recent days. Rubber prices have begun to soften; copper, lead and coffee quotations have receded somewhat from their war-induced astronomical levels; while zinc and sugar prices have stiffened. The greatest problem appears to be the possibility of a coal shortage in Europe.

Star of Empire: A Study of Britain as a World Power, 1485-1945, by William B. Willcox. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1950. \$5.

A University of Michigan historian presents what he calls "interpretative history" over the four and one-half centuries that brought Britain both to the heights of world power and to its present relative decline. A well-written volume which covers a great deal of ground.

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